

Ref. T1/2.08

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION FOR THE SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA, 1974

Equivalent arrangements accepted under regulation I/5

Radiocommunication equipment

Statement by the Government of the Netherlands

The Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization has the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by the Government of the Netherlands under regulation I/5 of the above Convention.

The Secretary-General would be grateful if steps could be taken to bring this information to the attention of the appropriate authorities.

STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE NETHERLANDS

Regulation IV/14.1 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) requires all equipment to which chapter IV applies to conform with appropriate performance standard not inferior to those adopted by the Organization. Where float-free emergency position-indicating radio beacons operating on 406 MHz are concerned, the appropriate performance standard is laid down in resolution A.763(18).

Paragraph 2.3.10 of this resolution requires the EPIRB to be equipped with a buoyant lanyard suitable for use as a tether, which should be so arranged as to prevent its being trapped in the ship's structure when floating free.

Experience in the Netherlands both during mandatory inspections as well as during inspection carried out in connection with regulation I/19 of the SOLAS Convention has given rise for concern about this requirement. It was established that on several vessels the lanyard was used as a lashing to additionally secure the EPIRB to the ship.

The recent sinking of a dutch fishing vessel raised further concern about this lanyard.

The SAR-action was severely hampered by the fact that the EPIRB lanyard had become entangled in the vessel's mast structure (this was established after the wreck was lifted). This resulted in the EPIRB giving a single burst alert before going down with the ship as a result of which no position could be established. Only after one and a half hours, when the lanyard broke and the EPIRB drifted up and started transmitting in its normal sequence, could the SAR action be initiated.

It is the view of the Netherlands that the lanyard on EPIRBs does not make a significant contribution to the safety of life at sea. For the purpose of tethering it to a survival craft sufficient material is available in those survival craft to do so.

In view of the above, the Netherlands gives notification of the following equivalent arrangements to regulation IV/14.1, under the provisions of regulation I/5 of the above Convention:

"Float-Free Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons operating on 406 MHz are not allowed to be fitted with the lanyard as stipulated in paragraph 2.3.10 of resolution A.763(18) but instead have to be fitted with a suitable fitting for attachment of a lanyard originating from a survival craft or rescue boat."
